

G563: German Culture I

Professor William Rasch

MW 5:45-7:00; BH 664

Office hours: by appointment, contact Randy Simmons 855-7947 for available times

Greek Antiquity, German Modernity

Purpose: Traditionally, reactions to what Max Weber referred to as the proliferation of autonomous value spheres and what his heirs (e.g., sociologists like Parsons, Habermas, and Luhmann) have termed the differentiation of social systems and system rationalities have been overwhelmingly negative. Since the 18th century, critics of all persuasions have bemoaned the “fragmentation” and “alienation” of modern society. Many of these luminaries of the German intellectual tradition have looked to ancient Greece in their search for a counter-model against which the modern world could be measured and with which it might be corrected. The purpose of this course is to examine the ideal image of Greece and Greek culture they constructed in their endeavors to imagine the possibility of fashioning through education the modern individual into a harmonious whole in a society likewise healed of its all too contemporary wounds.

Books:Hegel: *Philosophie der Geschichte*Herder: *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*Hölderlin: *Hyperion oder Der Eremit in Griechenland*Nietzsche: *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*Schiller: *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*--: *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*Winckelmann: *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*

Course reader (E-reserve or photocopy): Texts by Goethe, Herz, Hölderlin, W. v. Humboldt, Jaeger, Lukács, Nietzsche, Pound, Schleiermacher, R. Varnhagen, Wilamowitz, and others.

Schedule:Week of: Readings:**Philosophy of History**

Aug 30

M: Intro

W: Herder: *Auch eine Philosophie* (“Erster Abschnitt”)

Sep 6

M: Herder: *Auch eine Philosophie* (“Zweiter u. Dritter Abschnitt”)W: Hegel: *Philosophie der Geschichte* (“Einleitung” up to but not including “Geographische Grundlage”)

Sep 13

M: Hegel: *Philosophie der Geschichte* (“Zweiter Teil”)W: Schiller: *Aesthetische Erziehung* (Letters 1-9)

Aesthetics

- Sep 20 M: Winckelmann: *Gedanken über die Nachahmung*
W: Schiller: *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung*
- Sep 27 M: Schiller (continue above)
W: Lukács: *Theorie des Romans* (Part 1, chapters 1 and 5; **reader**)
- Oct 4 M: Hölderlin: *Hyperion*
W: Hölderlin (continue above)

Bildung

--Philology and Bildung--

- Oct 11 M: Humboldt: “Über das Studium des Altertums...”
(Paragraphs 1-13; **reader**)
W: Selections from letters by Wolf, Humboldt, and Nietzsche
(from *Bildungsgang und Lebensplan*, pp. 86-89, 95-96,
280-81, **reader**)
- Oct 18 M: Humboldt: “Theorie der Bildung des Menschen” (**reader**)
W: Goethe: *Wilhelm Meister* (short selection, **reader**); letter
(from *Bildungsgang...*, pp. 103-04, **reader**)

--Salons and Geselligkeit--

- Oct 25 M: Herz: *Erinnerungen* (7-68; **reader**)
W: Letters by Varnhagen (**reader**); D. Schlegel (in Herz:
278-80; **reader**)
- Nov 1 M: Herz: *Erinnerungen* (87-93; **reader**)
Schleiermacher: letters (in Herz 253-78, 284-86, 322-35;
reader)
W: Schleiermacher: “Versuch einer Theorie des geselligen
Betragens” (**reader**)

--Women, Jews, the lower classes--

- Nov 8 M: *Bildungsgang und Lebensplan* (, pp. 29-30, 38-40, 233-35,
265-270; **reader**)
W: *Bildungsgang...* (pp. 68-70, 78-83, 179-85, 189-92, 254-56;
reader)

--Philology and Wissenschaft--

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| Nov 15 | M: Nietzsche: <i>Geburt der Tragödie</i> W: Nietzsche: (continue above) |
| Nov 22 | M: Wilamowitz: <i>Zukunftsphilologie</i> (reader) W: Thanksgiving Break |
| Nov 29 | M: Nietzsche: “Wir Philologen” (reader) W: Nietzsche: (continue above) |
| Dec 6 | M: Pound: “Provincialism, the Enemy,” letter to William Carlos Williams (reader) W: Wrap-up |

Writing assignments:

In addition to preparation for and active participation in class, the following writing assignments will be required:

The class will be broken up into three groups. Each group will be responsible for producing a document covering one of the three main areas of the course, namely, *Philosophy of History*, *Aesthetics*, and *Bildung*. The document should include the following:

- 1) a synthesis of the arguments of each of the main authors covered in the section;
- 2) a set of critical remarks or in-depth questions about each text that are meant to stimulate thought and further research;
- 3) a bibliography of significant secondary literature treating the authors and themes of the texts under discussion.

After consultation with me (and possible revision), each group will provide a copy of its document to every student in the class. The three documents will be subject of discussion during the final day of class.

(Groups 1 and 2 will be responsible for all the texts in their section. Group 3 [*Bildung*] will be responsible for the texts by Humboldt, Wolf, Herz, Schleiermacher [“Versuch”], and Nietzsche [*Geburt*]).

OR:

Seminar paper on any topic related to the course.